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## U.S. Tightens Data Security, But Still Fears Infiltrators

The U.S. government has overhauled many security practices since infiltrators from the Church of Scientology stole thousands of sensitive documents, but federal officials say they can't guarantee that it won't happen again.

"You can always be penetrated," said Lloyd Bastian, director of the security programs staff at the Justice Department. "We've improved security in this department, and we've had more support to promulgate new security programs, but we can't be absolutely sure we're safe."

On Friday, nine scientologists were convicted in U.S. District Court here of conspiring to steal some 15,000 government documents between 1973 and 1977.

The nine, who admitted to the thefts, said they acted to combat what they considered government harassment of their church.

Scientologists in government clerical jobs stole and photocopied documents from various agencies, among them the Justice Department, the Internal Revenue Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Security officials at those agencies have known about the infiltration for several years. They have responded by changing locks, installing alarms, moving files, altering computer programs, issuing new employee identification cards and conducting massive surveys of security procedures.

But the officials acknowledged in interviews Friday that they still haven't solved their biggest problem: preventing someone with a clean record from getting a government job and stealing sensitive files.

"Personnel security is the key," said Jerry Rubino, the Justice Department's security officer. "You can have all the locks and bells and whistles you want, but if a person's going to turn on you, it's very difficult to stop them. And there's really nothing to stop someone with a clean record from coming in and then working for someone else."

Rubino said the only truly effective solution would be to emulate the Central Intelligence Agency and administer lie detector tests to all employees — an expensive practice that would be probably be condemned by civil libertarians. Currently, most departments rely on background checks by the Office of Personnel Management.

If the job involved is classified as "sensitive," the background check entails a field investigation by officers who interview references, friends and former employers. But if an individual has good references and no criminal record, passing such a background check can be relatively easy.

"The secretary accused of taking documents from us had passed the background investigation — there was nothing that indicated the person was working for a subversive organization," explained Zane Pitman, a Coast Guard spokesman.

Since federal employment guidelines prohibit any questions about religion, there was no way for government investigators to know about the infiltrators' Scientology links. And at the time, such knowledge would not have been significant.

"We're geared up to look for things like a link to the KGB (Soviet secret police), not membership in a domestic church," said Rubino. "At that time, before all these revelations came out, even if we had known that a person was a member of the Church of Scientology there wouldn't have been any reason for suspicion."

"Even now, there's no way we can be sure of finding out if an applicant belongs to that church, and I'm not sure what we could do about it any case — it's illegal to discriminate based on religion. We hope to get a legal ruling on this particular situation soon," he said.

The court papers filed in the conspiracy case against nine Scientologists said that some of the defendants had gotten jobs as secretaries or clerks with the intention of stealing and photocopying documents.

Some of the documents were sought because they involved federal investigations of the church and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, for possible tax violations. Other papers — ones which Scientologists felt were embarrassing to the government — were stolen so they could be leaked to the press.

Scientologists used their jobs in the government agencies to go through files and convince janitors to open offices for them after working hours. They also brought in an expert locksmith, and at one point gained entrance into the office of then-Deputy Attorney General Harold B. Tyler Jr.

Tyler's office has since received new locks, Rubino said Friday, and additional security equipment has been installed in more than a dozen other areas of the building. The department has also given office managers a 100-page booklet illustrating exactly which types of locks, file cabinets and safes can be used for sensitive documents.

At the Drug Enforcement Administration an eight-volume, two-inch-thick study of security procedures was conducted after the infiltration by Scientologists.

David Hoover, a DEA spokesman, said that users of his agency's computer system must now know additional passwords in order to get information. Employees have been given new identification cards that must be worn, said Hoover, and any outsider in the building must be escorted at all times.

At the IRS, where Scientologists succeeded in planting eavesdropping devices, additional guards have been hired in the past several years, said an IRS spokesman Rod Young.

"Our staff has taken the necessary steps to increase our security in response to the Scientology situation," said Young. "No security system is 100 percent foolproof, but hopefully that sort of thing is less likely to occur now that certain steps have been taken."

Young, however, refused to elaborate on what those steps were.

"We don't want to go into great detail," he said, "because we don't want to give people a chance to think up new ways around them."